


Blowing Rocket
week: 7-15-2002

B-81

Vincent Properties
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Great Blowing Rock Location: 3 bedroom, 2 bath home overlooking the golf course on private beautifully landscaped lot. All hardwood floors with gas fireplace in great room with cathedral ceiling. Buy now and enjoy this summer.
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Charming 3 bedroom 2 bath house in peaceful neighborhood. Close to Blowing Rock school district. Great kitchen, large living room and 1 car garage. Well maintained \$289,900 (#146S)



Grandfather View With Exceptional Quality: Home features a spectacular kitchen, master suite, 2 stone fireplaces, hardwood floors, high ceilings & spacious rooms. 3rd & 4th floor spacious deck that allows for quiet & pleasant viewing of Grandfather Mountain, Hanging Rock & Beech Mountain. \$649,000 (#110J)



Beautifully Maintained Home: Totally updated with magnificent views to the south and north. Large covered patio and deck, new carpet and oak hardwood floors, plumbing and exterior trim siding in 99. Gentle laying land with vegetable or flower garden. Priced at \$469,000 (#107D)



Beautiful Home: Lovely 3 bedroom, 3 bath house ideal for a family. Large yard and pleasant neighborhood. Located in Blowing Rock School District. Equipped master bath, lots of family space in basement, huge 2-car garage and a great kitchen. Conveniently located close to Blowing Rock and Boone backdrops (the Blue Ridge Parkway). \$259,500 (#111J)



Wonderland Woods: Nice one level living in a quiet wooded setting. This 4 bedroom 2 1/2 bath home has a living room with 12 ft ceilings, gas log fireplace and a luxurious bonus room upstairs. Home also features a large 2-car garage, plenty of storage space, easy access and is close to the Blowing Rock Golf Course, Ridge Parkway. \$259,500 (#111J)

Wooded Mountain Retreat: Secluded mountain home in a quiet setting with nice views near Hound Ears Golf Club. 3 bedroom, 3 bath with loft area. Home features exposed beams, cathedral ceilings, stone fireplace, cozy kitchen and rocking chair porches. \$229,900 (#130J)

Authentic Log Cabin: Located in the Heart of Valle Crucis this wonderful hand scribed log cabin sits on 7.5 beautiful acres. 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath with master on the main floor, sun room, lush landscaping, open and wooded acreage and a rocking chair front porch. \$569,900 (#141J)

A Great Value: Over 3600 square feet. 4 bedroom, 4 bath home on a flat 4.5 acre tract south of Blowing Rock off of Hwy 321. Only \$235,000. 2 fireplaces, hardwood floors, huge master bedroom with jacuzzi and twin walk-in closets. 3 car garage. (#139C)

Blowing Rock: Custom Wasten Cedar log home. 2BR/2BA w/ sleeping loft & family rm which can be used for 3rd BR. On 1.3 heavily wooded acres overlooking splashing mtn. stream w/ lush vegetation. Very secluded. \$229,500 (#147G) Adjoining 1.4 acre lot for \$19,500

LAND

54.54 Acres: on Dutch Creek Road only 3 miles from Mast General Store. Great estate property or perfect for developing. Small pond with several creeks and a spring. With 2440 sq. ft. house. \$995,000 (#113D)

Beautiful Trout Stream & Acreage: 7.16 acres located on a beautiful trout stream with waterfalls and many great building sites. Easy access on a shared gravel road. Call for more details. \$79,900 (#242D)

Views, views, views: Pleasant new subdivision with some of the best views of Watauga County. \$73,400 (#249S)

Views: Beautiful wooded lot with several building sites and lots of old growth forest. Historic wagon trail on property. In Blowing Rock city limits \$125,000 (#220S)

Blowing Rock Lots: Only 8 lots remaining in this peaceful Blowing Rock setting. The development has a tastefully landscaped entrance, nice stream and pond, with lots offer a wooded settings, some with scenic views. Community w/ paved roads, city water & sewer. Prices begin at \$45,000

Blowing Rock Lots: Two large lots in Blowing Rock just around the corner from the stables area with a nice stream flowing across the back of the property. In the heart of the Mayview area. Great location for any home with a short walk to Main Street. City water & sewer to each lot. \$99,900 each (#209J)

Level New River Frontage & Unique Backdrop: This lot is already perked for a 3 bedroom home and includes this unique host home sitting on the edge of the New River. Located in a restricted cabin community, no stone was left unturned in this English style boat house. A beautiful lot to build your cabin by the river. Must see to truly appreciate \$69,000 (#219J)

COMMERCIAL

Business Opportunity: Excellent restaurant located in a prime area between Ski Beech and Sugar Mountain ski areas. Building, land and business are for sale. Profitable existing business with growth and expansion possibilities. \$399,900 (#301J). Call for more details.

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STUART GAUL, JR.
5325 Hardison Rd
Charlotte, N.C. 28226

Nicholas L. Graf, P. E.
Federal Highway Administration
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Re : U S 321

I am writing this to you and Wm. D Gilmore, to express the futility of continuous 4 laning, which will be 6 lanes soon, none of which will improve the distance, the road grades, or the multiple retarders of a small town

This folder includes : *My basic objections (A village street is not a highway), my objections to Secretary Tippet, and my more detailed letter to the Governor.*

DOT THINKS 321 IS VERY IMPORTANT

Dec. 16, 1988 : " ---This corridor (U S 321) forms the principal north-south connection uniting the western Piedmont. It is an important industrial development route and has significance to tourism, because it connects the Charlotte urban area with the northwest's mountains. It serves Charlotte, Gastonia, Lincolnton, Hickory, Lenoir, Blowing Rock and Boone. ---"

Question: THEN, WHY DOES DOT CONTINUE 321 THROUGH BLOWING ROCK ON A VILLAGE STREET, with bicycles, several traffic lights, dozens of left turns, and 25-35 mph ? Sooner or later there will be a serious accident. A bypass would avoid all this, rolling traffic non-stop.

SOME DOT MEMBERS RECOGNIZE THAT BYPASS WILL BE NECESSARY.

July 8, 1993 : Fred Eidson, a senior DOT member of the Board of Transportation, stated that "a bypass of Blowing Rock would be necessary within 20-30 years," TODAY, that essentially means 10-20 years,

If DOT now proceeds to "widen" the two lanes on south side of Bl. Rk, almost 10 years after that wise warning, it will take them up to 5 years; and cost about \$50,000,000. (DOT's data)

Yet, the road will Not have been shortened; the 8% grade up Gideon Ridge will still see heavy trucks climbing at 8-10 mph trailing 20-40 autos and other trucks, and as they crawl through town, stopping at one or two red lights, and braking for left turners Big money will have added nothing to the single highway.

Is this what DOT calls "---the principal north-south connection uniting the western Piedmont." ? A good Bypass is badly needed

I would appreciate hearing your responses

Stuart Gaul
Stuart Gaul

STUART GAUL, JR.
5325 Hardison Road
Charlotte, N.C. 28226

The Honorable Mr Lyndo Trippett,

Secretary, Department of Transportation

August 8, 2002

I believe it was in the 1950s that interstate traffic had begun to grow exponentially, and some one in the Highway Department * recognized that any trip of significance had to go down the main street of every big and little town along the way. It was a nuisance to the inter-state traveler and a risk for the town motorist.

In the ensuing 50 years we have seen dozens of town by-passes appear, for which I think *we are all very grateful*. Some states haven't gotten the idea yet.

Unfortunately, today's DOT officials prefer to spend 45.9 million to simply widen the existing route, in which no one seems interested, -which doesn't shorten the route, does not reduce the grades, and does not eliminate the Blowing Rock traffic lights: the very things by-passes are for. Our true bypass is designed to handle them.

In this time of financial recession we are aware of the scarcity of funds; BUT, there IS A much better, more urgent project that really needs your 45.9 million ..

EXAMPLE: Instead of wasting 45.9 million, to widen the road that nobody cares about,

- Do something that people want, and yet, spend only 20 million per year:

- Review your 4A route map (erase those 35-45% grades north-east of Green Hill, that somehow, sneaked onto your maps years ago. Did P.R. Dept draw that?

Our maps limit grades to 6%.

- obtain the rights of way for 4A;

- and begin preliminary cuts and fills for the Bypass., so needed by the thousands of truckers and other motorists.

THIS CAN BE A WIN-WIN SITUATION for all of us! The Blowing Rock people have voted three times for a true Bypass; they will like it, as will all the thousands of truck and auto drivers who need it.. A Bypass avoids ripping up town streets, for 5 years, necessary for "widening". The DOT fund should be happy, saving 2002 money.

You would have to spend a similar amount of 4A money annually, for at least 7-8 years; YOU WOULD SPREAD THAT \$170 MILLION OVER MANY YEARS.

QUESTION: Has DOT ever built a tunnel? I am not aware of any in North Carolina. I assume that Parsons, Brinkerhoff would do it. John Page and his associates were excited about building the Tunnel Bypass a few years ago.

RELATED:

The Blue Ridge Parkway has had 26 tunnels in operation for more than 50 years, built with mules, steam shovels, dynamite and lots of manpower. The Superintendent told us that maintenance was minimal: ice at the portals, and occasional rock slides.

The Cumberland Tunnel (Tennessee- Kentucky), 4,600 ft long, was opened in 1985 and carries heavy truck and auto traffic. All we need is an 800 ft tunnel. Trippett Tunnel?

* Early name for DOT

The Honorable Michael F. Easley.
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-0301

Wednesday, 21 August, 2002

Dear Sir:

I'm sure all you need is *another* problem. None-the less, I'm going to seek help from you, regarding your (*our*) largest State Department, the DOT. I am a member of the Concerned Citizens of Blowing Rock, N.C., the organization that is attempting to deal with the uncooperative DOT.

The Problem:

(1) DOT and Concerned Citizens agree that the 2-lane 321 from Blackberry Road, through Blowing Rock is inadequate, with grades of 7% and 8% on Gideon Ridge.

(2) DOT's solution is to "widen" 321, *which means* (in DOT language) rip up and widen existing road, cutting and filling, and destroying dozens of homes and businesses, which must require at least 5 years of blockade and detours for through traffic (85%) AND local traffic (15%)

(3) CONCERNED CITIZENS plan is to accomodate the huge and growing through traffic, by building a true by-pass east of Blowing Rock, and leaving the existing 321 for local traffic. WE HAVE WORKED OUT THE DETAILS (SEE DETAILS ON ATTACHED PAGES)

(4) For the last 7 years, DOT has "played games" with Concerned Citizens:

- they announced that the *Parkway* had suddenly gotten wider., and claiming that this precluded thoughts of tunnel bypass. Fact: this is PURE FRAUD.
- when Tunnel Bypass began to catch on, DOT's concept of the necessary tunnel length grew 400' a month: any thing to ignore Bypass. However, DOT forgot to "cant" *their* tunnel, without which, spontaneous ventilation will not occur, according to engineers at Parker, Brinkerhoff, et & al.
- DOT "bent" Tunnel Bypass on map, trying to "put it on" Historical Property but the DOT map did not match commercial maps. Another game bites the dust.
- Another "road moving game" tried to move Concerned Citizens Bypass 300-400 ft west, and Green Hill Road with its houses to the east, implying close quarters. BUT, houses on the ridge were now in the middle of the road and roadside houses halfway down the east slope. Another DOT grunch.
- And another DOT problem: Their bypass maps, accurate below Green Hill, suddenly explode upward, defying contour lines, climbing 17% and 25% grades - which no auto could climb, much less a truck. No engineer would accept this. Just who makes DOT's maps?

OBVIOUSLY, DOT CANNOT BE DEPENDED ON.

Stuart Gaul

Stuart Gaul

DOT IS APPARENTLY ACCUSTOMED TO DOING WHAT IT DAMN WELL PLEASES, AND TO HELL WITH THE TAX PAYING CITIZENS. I can understand rejecting complaints from people who don't understand the situation.

Our situation is very different; we have members thoroughly conversant with road building, cuts & fills, contour lines, grade percentages, curve tensions, tunnels, super elevations and other details involved in building roads.

We have consulted geologists (quality of tunnel rock), civil engineers, and the Superintendent of Blue Ridge Parkway (concerns about tunnel details).

WE HAVE PROPOSED A TRUE BYPASS THAT HANDLES THE 85% THROUGH TRAFFIC AROUND THE EAST SIDE OF BLOWING ROCK, LEAVING THE ORIGINAL 2-LANE 321 FOR THE 15 % TRAFFIC WHO ARE AIMED AT BLOWING ROCK.

Despite DOT's acceptance of the Tunnel Bypass, (2 of the 5 options), DOT has made it clear that it will spend money on the "NO-BRAINER": widening, even though widening existing 321 won't be necessary when a bypass comes, and a DOT official has said years ago that "we'll need a bypass before long".

SOMEBODY SHOULD STOP DOT FROM SPENDING HARD-TO-GET MONEY FOR WIDENING THE 321, WHEN THEY SHOULD WORK TOWARD THE BYPASS THE TRUCKING BUSINESS MAY BE PUSHING DOT

I'll stop here, and get to the point:

Do you, as Governor, have the responsibility for controlling, or advising the activities of the various Departments?

If this does come under your jurisdiction, then I, as a member of the Concerned Citizens, ask you to review this and following pages, with the hope that you or your assistants may see fit to discuss this with Secretary Tippet, pointing out that: **each year the Bypass becomes more urgent; that starting yesterday the Bypass won't be ready until the year 2012., that each year we continue to procrastinate make it worse. DO IT NOW !!**

(a) We agree that 321 between Blackberry and Blowing Rock, with 2 lanes, grades of 7% & 8% is a bottleneck, and we realize the impossibility of adding lanes to 45 degree slopes on Guideon Ridge.

(b) that road-widening will never improve crowding, nor grades, nor distance, (c) that widening can never reach Highway quality.

(d) that Concerned Citizens have, indeed, designed a reasonable bypass, that truck and auto drivers badly need, and that DOT itself has at last apparently accepted Bypass as the inevitable answer.

(e) the widening that DOT hangs on to year after year will not need widening, when 85% of traffic is travelling on the By-pass.

Stuart Gaul

Stuart Gaul

COMMENT SHEET

US 321 Improvements

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C

Project 6.739001T

Caldwell and Watauga Counties

August 26, 2002

NAME: RICHARD GELDMETER, M.D.

ADDRESS: 161 JURRENTO FOREST DR., BLOWING ROCK, NC

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS: 28605

SPEAKING FOR MY WIFE AND MYSELF, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE WIDENING OF EXISTING 321 IS THE MOST FISCALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE ALTERNATIVE. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY IT WOULD DESTROY THE CHARACTER OF BLOWING ROCK, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 4-LANE HIGHWAY THAT PASSES UNDER THE B.R. PARKWAY IS MUCH MORE DESTRUCTIVE OF THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA THAN WOULD BE THE WIDENING OF 2 LANES OF HIGHWAY TO 4, OR EVEN 5. MY ACTUAL PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO DO NOTHING, BUT IT SEEMS THAT THE D.O.T. DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE.

Comments may be mailed to:

C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.

Manager of the Office of Human Environment

1583 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092 Fax: (919) 250-4208

E-mail: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us

COMMENT SHEET

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C Project 6.739001T Caldwell and Watauga Counties

August 26, 2002

NAME:

RALPH GLASER JR

ADDRESS: 403 LAUREL PARK ROAD BLOWING ROCK NC 28605

P.O. BOX 2085

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

As a property owner and long-time resident of Blowing Rock, I am writing to support the construction of a "true bypass" around our village. It would be detrimental to our way of life and our sense of community to widen the existing Highway 321 or adopt Proposals 1-A or 1-B. I do not want a four-lane divided highway through Blowing Rock. I am truly concerned about increased traffic congestion and noise, the destruction and compromise of our historic properties, the integrity of our small town character, and the long-term harms associated with a project through the town limits. My personal experiences with the widening of Highway 321 north of Lenoir, also make me dread the traffic nightmares and construction problems associated with this widening project. Please do not be penny wise and pound foolish in making your decisions about a bypass around Blowing Rock. The historical importance of Blowing Rock and the future demands of the high country warrant the adoption of a "true bypass." My vote and my financial support will be used to defeat any politician or government official who supports the destruction of Blowing Rock as we know it.

P.S. A BYPASS COULD CONTINUE AROUND DOONE WHICH WOULD THEN GREATLY IMPROVE THE DISASTEROUS TRAFFIC CONGESTION THERE - A FAR MORE FORWARD PROPOSAL THAN ANY OTHER PROPOSED WHICH WOULD GREATLY BENEFIT THE ENTIRE HI COUNTRY.

Comments may be mailed to:

C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.

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1583 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092 Fax: (919) 250-4208

E-mail: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us

Sue Glenn, PO Box 1770, Blowing Rock, NC 28605

ACCIDENTS/SAFETY

I am Sue Glenn here tonight speaking only for myself with no personal positive benefit from any of the alternative choices. I would personally be negatively affected by all of the alternatives. If anyone here sees something positive I'm missing, please share that with me so I'll feel better!

In reviewing the EIS document and speaking with the engineers, I was particularly alarmed to see the information presented that, - statistically -, the 2.3 mile urban section of US 321 through Blowing Rock showed higher accident rates than the state comparative rate. Since my personal experience - one minor fender bender in 30 years - has not shown the road to be particularly dangerous, I went to our police station to take a look at the police accident reports to see what was really going on. I only had time to review the hundreds of records for the past couple years, but I believe the patterns are probably similar for earlier periods as well.

What I found was that, in terms of property damage, you are far likelier to be involved in a property damage accident at the post office, at the shopping centers, or in one of our parking areas, than you are on Hwy 321! The types of accidents that are now happening, with a very few exceptions, are very minor fender benders with relatively little damage and few injuries. Clusters of accidents happen around the intersections where people are failing to pay proper attention to what is going on around them or at entrances to popular restaurants along Valley Boulevard. Icing conditions, snowy, slippery roads, blowing snow,

and fog and rain contribute to some accidents, too, but fewer than we might expect. People are traveling slowly enough that injuries and property damage are typically very minor. Of course, their slow travel helps DOT add another bad statistic to their report for so-called "level-of-service or LOS rating". But slow speed alone has probably protected many drivers from more severe injury.

When I talked with the engineers, they explained that they were not showing turn lanes in their design because, with four lanes, they wouldn't be needed. I note that many of the more expensive accidents occurred at the Shoppes on the Parkway intersection that does not have a turn lane into Possum Hollow Road.

Since their design showed a planted median, access by northbound traffic to any businesses -that survived the construction period - on the west side of Valley Boulevard would be accomplished by making a u-turn into on-coming traffic at the next available intersection. With a planted median to reduce visibility, that certainly didn't seem like a safer alternative plan to me. There would only be a couple businesses on the east side of Valley Boulevard left to access.

The engineers admitted that many of the things that could be done right now to make the present roadway more functional and safer were not high on DOT's priority list, even though they could be done without any of the hoopla we are now seeing. Yes, slightly straightening out the curves between Norwood Circle and Pinnacle Avenue and providing a left turn lane would make that stretch safer. Yes, providing a turn lane into Possum Hollow Road would make

that intersection safer. Yes, even making Valley Boulevard three lanes with a turn lane in the middle would make it safer. Though those improvements alone would not allow the increased traffic loads projected by 2025 to be handled with the acceptable LOS flow rating, yes, these things would probably need to be done even if one of the other road alternatives were selected.

Although improved safety was one of the first features touted by DOT when this project was initially proposed, I note that many of the improved safety features that showed up in earlier designs have not been offered in the latest one.

One of our most dangerous and catastrophic accident areas is the first four-lane section just below the Blackberry Road intersection. Though the middle section plans only went to the south end of Falconcrest Subdivision, this stretch of road does not appear on present plans either - perhaps because DOT doesn't want to talk about it just now. Curves here are so tight that truck loads can't recover their equilibrium before the trucks hit the next opposing curve. Loads shift and truckers lose control.

The proposed plan also refuses to acknowledge the effects of weather conditions on road safety. The engineers freely stated that did not take fog into account, but looked quite blank when I pointed out, because of the elevational change and the topography, there are transitional weather effects from the first four-lane area up. That is where the snow and freezing road conditions often begin, at great surprise for unprepared motorists speeding up the mountain expecting to maintain their rate of speed and their LOS.

It was particularly chilling for me to understand that DOT typically does not take minimal safety improvement steps until there has been a really terrible accident. Though I had reported accident after accident and had requested curve markers on the turn at my condominium, it was not until a young man was killed there that curve markers and guard rails were installed - less than a month after his death. Though the engineers working on this project know what to do, their assignment is very narrow and constrained by other factors. We cannot count on DOT to make the road as safe as possible all by themselves.

After many questions, it also became clear that the pretty pictures we are seeing are not truly a promise of what will come. The proposal to put the utility wires underground as part of the construction process for the widening alternative is merely a proposal, not a promise. Putting the wires underground would substantially increase the construction time, add cost to the project, and complicate matters. It is exactly the sort of thing that might be deleted from a final plan. It is interesting that vegetation seems to automatically grow better and to greater maturity along the widening route than along the cuts and fills of the by-pass alternatives.

We know from local experience on the Linn Cove Viaduct that beautiful, expensive roads will not be built by road-builders unless, kicking and screaming, they are forced to build them that way. Then these roads become the crown-jewels of those road builders' career accomplishments and visitor-attractions in their own right. Like the Glenwood Canyon road in Colorado, we just want the best, safest, most beautiful road that we can be built.

COMMENT SHEET

US 321 Improvements

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C

Project 6.739001T

Caldwell and Watauga Counties

August 26, 2002

NAME:

Marie Gouns

ADDRESS:

4545 Blowing Rock Blvd

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

*Follow The Existing Road as is
now. If this Road is not built
we will lose to 421 Economy
wise*

Comments may be mailed to:

C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.

Manager of the Office of Human Environment

1583 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092 Fax: (919) 250-4208

E-mail: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us

COMMENT SHEET

US 321 Improvements

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C Project 6.739001T Caldwell and Watauga Counties
August 26, 2002

NAME: Janice J. Grane

ADDRESS: PO Box 428, Blowing Rock, NC 28605

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

B-87 Blowing Rock deserves a legitimate bypass. This
option is routinely offered to other communities. Nothing
other than Alternative 4 A or 4 B will meet ~~the~~
the needs of the community. Please consider
that the other alternatives will destroy Blowing Rock.

Comments may be mailed to:
C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.
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Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092 Fax: (919) 250-4208
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COMMENT SHEET

US 321 Improvements

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C Project 6.739001T Caldwell and Watauga Counties
August 26, 2002

NAME: WALTER G. GREEN

ADDRESS: 143 SKI CREST PARK BLOWING ROCK NC 28605

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

U.S. HWY 321 THRU BLOWING ROCK - PLEASE WIDEN
THE EXISTING ROAD

OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION
RECEIVED
OCT 01 2002

Comments may be mailed to:
C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.
Manager of the Office of Human Environment
1583 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092 Fax: (919) 250-4208
E-mail: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us

Wayne Green
2028 Laurel Fork Road
Vilas, N. C. 28692

September 25, 2002

Mr. Carl Goode
Manager, Office of Human Environment
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1583 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina, 27699-1583

Dear Mr. Goode:

First of all, let me apologize for the rude behavior exhibited towards the D.O.T. at the public hearing concerning the proposed routes for U. S. 321 through or around Blowing Rock. It was inexcusable.

I urge you to widen the existing corridor, as that is the most cost-effective option for the taxpayers of North Carolina. I must in all honesty inform you that I am one of the owners of a large tract of land (109 + acres that has been cut into 10 acre tracts) that joins the Blowing Rock City Limits at Green Hill. However, if you were to pay me what the comparable prices for this property indicate, I would be rich. This is especially so if it is true I do not have to pay capitol gains if the state takes the land. However, what would be good for me is not necessarily good for the state.

I would like to address the proposed right of way acquisition figures that are in your report. I feel these numbers are terribly low for whichever route you decide to take. This project has been delayed for about 12 years. In that period of time, the value of property around Blowing Rock has risen enormously. The last tax re-evaluation shows that property in this area has gained in value by a factor of 3 to 5 times what it was 7 years ago. Merely getting the right of way may cost more than the entire project would have even 10 years ago. I will come back to this point later.

The old original wagon road, Highway 17, and U.S. 321 do not deviate from the same position by more than 200 feet. In most places, they were built over the previous road. This is because the best place to put a road is where it is now located. I realize that technology has progressed to the point that it is possible to move earth and build bridges that could not have been done even 20 years ago. The fact of the matter is that just because it is possible to do something, it doesn't mean it should be done. I find it difficult to understand how destroying the view from the Parkway or tearing up the side of Green Hill at a much greater cost than widening the present corridor would be preferable.

I would now like to go back to the matter of the cost of right of way acquisition. The D.O.T. already has a 100 foot right of way from the red light at Chetola to the top of the by-pass (What the Concerned Citizens call Valley Boulevard). They already have a

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION
RECEIVED

OCT 01 2002

100-foot right of way from the road leading to the Blowing Rock out of the city limits. They only need to acquire the right of way necessary to connect these two areas, assuming that the D.O.T. does not worry about the enhancements that it previously offered the Town. It is not fair for the taxpayers of North Carolina to pay for these sidewalks, etc. when the Town will not put any of its own money toward them. For example, the Town had a grant to help build a sidewalk along U.S. 221 from Main Street to Bass Lake. This sidewalk was the number one priority for sidewalks according to a survey that was taken by the Town. I think this survey was done about 3 years ago. When the budget was adopted, this sidewalk was cut because the Town did not want to pay its share of the cost. The excuse was financial hardship placed on the Town by the State due to the budget shortfall. Blowing Rock has one of the highest property evaluations of anywhere in the state and is in better financial shape than most of the state. It can afford to pay its own way.

I would like to suggest that the road be widened where the present 100-foot rights-of-way exist. I would suggest that a concrete median be placed between the directions of travel to expedite through traffic. This is supposed to be a major highway (currently a by-pass), not a Town street. I would suggest that the D.O.T. allow the Town to put in sidewalks, plantings, etc. within any excess right-of-way the state has as long as the town does it at its own expense. If the Town needs additional space, they can exercise eminent domain as well as the state can.

I am very much in favor of sidewalks and plantings. I am not in favor of wasting money. I really believe that if it were not for certain factions within the Town delaying this project, it would have already been completed at a much lower cost. I feel that as the Town is the cause of the increase in cost, it should bear the burden of this increase when it comes to enhancements. If the Town can reverse itself about sidewalks for financial reasons, then it has no complaint if the State does the same thing.

It might interest you to know that one of the Town Council told me that the Concerned Citizens had pretty much disintegrated. They are supposed to be coming to the Council to have them ask for the maximum amount of enhancements that the state will give Blowing Rock. I hope you will look after the interests of the taxpayers of North Carolina and not cave to political pressure from the people that have caused the increase in cost of the project. As you know, North Carolina does not have money to waste.

It is easy for me to tell you what you should do. You are the people that have to decide what is best for North Carolina. Whatever you do will make somebody mad. All I can say is do the best you can.

Sincerely yours;

Wayne Green
Wayne Green

COMMENT SHEET

US 321 Improvements

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C Project 6.739001T Caldwell and Watauga Counties

August 26, 2002

NAME:

Sharon P. Green

ADDRESS:

5929 Hwy 421 South, Boone, NC 28607

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

B-89 I think that engineers should follow the present 321 and 321 Bypass through Blowing Rock. The drawings were "very attractive". It makes much more sense to follow the present route than to take property and homes away from this area. Businesses are not exempt from relocation.

Subject: 321 Bypass

Date: Sat, 24 Aug 2002 14:57:39 -0400

From: "Sam Greeson" <sam_greeson@hotmail.com>

To: scalesR@pbworld.com

CC: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us

I feel that the only viable alternative is the total by pass of Blowing Rock. The widening of existing 321 would be outdated before it was completed and Alternatives 1A & 1B are unthinkable. They would destroy the greenhill community. So my list is:

- 1 Tunnel under parkway
- 2 Widen existing 321
- 3 Do not even consider 1A & 1B

Send and receive Hotmail on your mobile device: <http://mobile.msn.com>

RECEIVED
SEP 03 2002

Comments may be mailed to:

C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.

Manager of the Office of Human Environment

1583 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092

E-mail: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us Fax: (919) 250-4208

COMMENT SHEET

US 321 Improvements

Corridor Public Hearing

R-2237C Project 6.739001T Caldwell and Watauga Counties

August 26, 2002

NAME: JENNIE & THOMAS GRIST
ADDRESS: 1121 HARRIS BLVD Dr., Lenoir, NC 28645

COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

B-90 Please consider the "widening
alternative"; as Blowing Rock
certainly needs a face lift - Getting
to look bad!!

Comments may be mailed to:
C. B. Goode, Jr., P. E.
Manager of the Office of Human Environment
1583 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1599 Phone: (919) 250-4092 Fax: (919) 250-4208
E-mail: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us

Subject: FW: US 321 Improvements
Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 08:39:39 -0400
From: "Scales, Reggie" <ScalesR@pbworld.com>
To: 'Carl Goode' <cgoode@dot.state.nc.us>

-----Original Message-----

From: gryder [mailto:jgg@conninc.com]
Sent: Monday, September 02, 2002 6:54 PM
To: ScalesR@pbworld.com
Cc: cgoode@dot.state.nc.us
Subject: US 321 Improvements

We are full time Caldwell Co. residents and live just south of the Watauga Co. line. Our family is in the Boone/Blowing Rock area no less than twice a week for shopping and entertainment. Our Doctors and Dentist are located in Boone. We travel US 321 daily to work so we have 1st hand experience dealing with the traffic on this highway. We feel we have the right to comment on the widening of US 321 through Blowing Rock, to the four lane North of Blowing Rock.

With our State in the financial trouble it is now suffering we find it unbelievable that there is even a question of spending an extra 200 million dollars to bypass a small section of highway that the state has already the right of way to more than half of. The "Concerned Citizens of Blowing Rock" would have us believe that the widening of US321 would damage the quaint town of Blowing Rock. US321 bypasses the town!!!

The "Concerned Citizens of Blowing Rock" would have us believe that the widening of US321 would destroy landmarks ie Green Park Inn. There is ample room to widen the highway and never touch Green Park Inn.

If the "Concerned Citizens of Blowing Rock" feel the 3 or so mile section is this valuable then I say let them pay the additional \$200 million dollars it will take over the \$50 million it will cost to widen the existing highway. I for one do not feel the "Concerned Citizens of Blowing Rock" should be allowed to cost the taxpayers of North Carolina an additional \$200 million dollars.

Whew! We already feel better! Please do the right thing this time and look for the least expensive plan to solve this problem, as we the "Concerned Citizens of North Carolina" are sick to death of taxes.

Thank you Douglas and Teresa Gryder

6949 Richland Rd

Lenoir, NC 28645